United Nations S/PV.3930

Security Council

Fifty-third Year

Provisional

3930th Meeting

Wednesday, 23 September 1998, 3.30 p.m.

New York

President:	Ms. Hjelm-Wallen	(Sweden)
Members:	Bahrain	Mr. Al-Dosari
	Brazil	Mr. Valle
	China	Mr. Qin Huasun
	Costa Rica	Mr. Niehaus
	France	Mr. Dejammet
	Gabon	Mr. Moungara-Moussotsi
	Gambia	Mr. Jagne
	Japan	Mr. Owada
	Kenya	Mr. Mahugu
	Portugal	Mr. Monteiro
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Slovenia	Mr. Frlec
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Burleigh

Agenda

Letter dated 11 March 1998 from the Deputy Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1998/223)

Letter dated 27 March 1998 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1998/272)

Report of the Secretary-General prepared pursuant to resolution 1160 (1998) of the Security Council (S/1998/834 and Add.1)

98-85858 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.40 p.m.

Welcome to Foreign Ministers

The President: I am pleased to acknowledge the presence at the Council table of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Portugal and Slovenia. On behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to them.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

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The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Germany and Italy in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Milo (Albania), Mr. Sacirbey (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Mr. Kastrup (Germany) and Mr. Fulci (Italy) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General prepared pursuant to resolution 1160 (1998) of the Security Council, documents S/1998/834 and addendum 1.

Members of the Council also have before them document S/1998/882, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I shall first give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): Allow me to express our satisfaction, Madam, at seeing you, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, presiding over this very important meeting of the Security Council.

The situation in and around Kosovo, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, remains extremely difficult. As a result of the continued armed confrontations, including some in which heavy weapons are used, there is a steady flow of refugees and displaced persons, which, under conditions of the onset of winter, is fraught with grave humanitarian consequences. In violation of Security Council resolution 1160 (1998), material and financial support from abroad continues to be provided to Kosovo extremists, first and foremost from the territory of Albania, which is seriously destabilizing the situation and provoking tensions in Kosovo. Despite the efforts undertaken, it has to date been impossible to establish a direct political dialogue between the Serbian authorities, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the leadership of the Kosovo Albanians.

Under these circumstances, an urgent need has arisen to give additional impetus to international efforts to facilitate a political settlement and the normalization of the humanitarian situation in the area.

Such an impetus should be given by the draft resolution that the Security Council will be adopting

today. That draft resolution explicitly reaffirms the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and calls once again upon Belgrade and the Kosovo Albanians to cease hostilities immediately and maintain a ceasefire in Kosovo in order to create favourable conditions for the launching of a political dialogue and to avert a humanitarian disaster.

The Security Council demands also that the authorities in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Kosovo Albanian leadership take immediate steps to improve the humanitarian situation. It calls upon them once again to enter immediately into a meaningful dialogue leading to a negotiated political settlement to the issue of Kosovo, and endorses the agreements reached by the Presidents of Russia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia at their June meeting in Moscow.

It insists that the Kosovo Albanian leadership condemn all terrorist action and rely on peaceful means only. The draft resolution reaffirms the provisions of Security Council resolution 1160 (1998), *inter alia*, on assistance to Kosovo separatists from abroad. It condemns the continuing promotion from abroad of terrorist activities in Kosovo. Recalling the obligations of all States to implement fully the prohibitions imposed by resolution 1160 (1998), the Security Council expresses concern over reports of their continuing violation. The draft resolution also contains a reference to Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, as did resolution 1160 (1998).

The Security Council maintains that if the demands set forth in resolution 1160 (1998) and in the draft resolution before us today — which apply both to Belgrade and the Albanians living in Kosovo — are not met, the Council will consider further actions and necessary additional measures. No use of force and no sanctions are being imposed by the Council at the present stage.

The basic provisions of the draft resolution correspond to the fundamental stance taken by the Russian Federation which favours settlement of the conflict in Kosovo exclusively through peaceful and political means on the basis of granting broad autonomy to Kosovo, with strict respect for the territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. We are convinced that there is no reasonable alternative to such an approach. In particular, the use of unilateral measures of force in order to settle this conflict is fraught with the risk of destabilizing the Balkan region and of all of Europe and would have long-term adverse consequences for the international system, which relies on the central role of the United Nations.

The Russian Federation, in voting in favour of today's draft resolution, will continue to make an active to contribution to international efforts to foster a peaceful settlement of the Kosovo conflict.

Mr. Qin Huasun (China) (interpretation from Chinese): We welcome you, Madame, as the President of today's meeting of the Security Council.

China has always been of the view that the question of Kosovo is an internal matter of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Proceeding from the principle, recognized by the whole international community, of respect for and maintenance of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, we believe that the question of Kosovo should and can only be solved by the Yugoslav people themselves in their own way. Ultimately, it is for the Yugoslav people themselves to come to a resolution.

We appreciate the position of the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia regarding settling the Kosovo issue through unconditional dialogue. The situation in the Kosovo region is now stabilizing. There is no large-scale armed conflict, still less any escalation of the conflict. The Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has also taken a series of positive measures to encourage the refugees to return home and provide facilities for humanitarian relief work.

However, at the same time, we are gravely concerned about the action — pointed out in the Secretary-General's report of 4 September — of blocking, for political purposes, the return of refugees and prolonging the humanitarian crisis so as to keep the attention of the international community on this region.

We believe that the international community should view the current situation in Kosovo as it really is and evaluate the positive efforts by the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in an objective and just manner. We do not see the situation in Kosovo as a threat to international peace and security.

I would like to reiterate here that many countries in the region are multi-ethnic. If the Security Council becomes involved in a dispute without being requested to do so by the countries of the region — or goes even further and unfairly applies pressure on or threatens

actions against the Government of the country concerned — it would create a bad precedent and have wider negative implications.

Unfortunately, the draft resolution before us has not taken into full consideration the situation in Kosovo and the legitimate rights of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia within its sphere of sovereignty. It has invoked Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter all too indiscreetly in order to threaten the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. This will not help bring about the fundamental settlement of the Kosovo issue. It may, on the contrary, reinforce the separatist and terrorist forces in the region and increase the tension there.

In view of the above, the Chinese delegation cannot support the draft resolution before us and will be compelled to abstain.

The President: I shall now put to the vote the draft resolution contained in S/1998/882.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bahrain, Brazil, Costa Rica, France, Gabon, Gambia, Japan, Kenya, Portugal, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining:

China

The President: The result of the voting is as follows: 14 in favour and 1 abstention. The draft resolution has been adopted as resolution 1199 (1998).

I shall now call on those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom): It is our privilege to have you, Madam, in the chair of the Council this afternoon.

Despite the efforts of the international community to help find a settlement, the security forces of President Milosevic are continuing to inflict brutality and repression on those they claim to see as their fellow citizens. The so-called Kosovo Liberation Army has contributed to the present crisis. Terrorism in whatever guise and for whatever end is unacceptable. But as the British Prime Minister said in his speech to the General Assembly two days ago:

> "Nothing can justify scorched earth tactics and forcible creation of hundreds of thousands of refugees".

This resolution, co-sponsored and strongly supported by the United Kingdom, does three things. First, it calls for an immediate ceasefire and for the two parties to begin a political dialogue — the only route to a political and lasting solution. Secondly, it sets out clearly President Milosevic's obligations and commitments, including to put an end to repression and to facilitate the return of refugees. Thirdly, and most important, it makes clear that the international community's patience is exhausted.

President Milosevic carries a direct responsibility. If he ignores those obligations and continues to pursue military repression, the international community will respond and will respond vigorously. By acting under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter and by explicitly characterizing the deterioration of the situation in Kosovo as a threat to peace and security in the region, the Security Council is putting President Milosevic on notice that he will be held accountable for his actions. He would be wise to take heed.

Mr. Burleigh (United States of America): May I also welcome you with us here today, Madam President.

My Government strongly supports this important resolution on Kosovo. It underscores our growing concern that Belgrade's repressive actions have created a potentially catastrophic humanitarian situation as winter approaches. It increases pressure on Belgrade to negotiate seriously with the Kosovo Albanians to achieve a political settlement that provides for democratic self-government for the people of Kosovo and avoids the devastating consequences of continued conflict. It also affirms that the situation constitutes a serious threat to peace and security in the region.

To date, approximately a quarter of a million people have been displaced by the offensive actions of the Serb security forces. At least 50,000 Kosovo Albanians are living in open valleys and forests, without shelter or basic

necessities. The international community must act to prevent a disaster this fall.

The best way to stem this crisis is for Belgrade to heed our demands for an immediate cessation of offensive actions and the pull-back of its security forces. We also call for a meaningful dialogue, without preconditions and with international involvement, leading to a solution to the Kosovo question, as set out in this resolution. My Government is continuing its efforts to assist in such a dialogue and to coordinate with members of the Contact Group and others in this effort.

In particular, the authorities in Belgrade must be held to account for creating the current crisis. It is their responsibility to create the conditions to allow all refugees and displaced persons to return to their homes in safety. Belgrade is responsible for the well-being of the people of Kosovo, as well as for the security of all diplomatic personnel and non-governmental humanitarian personnel on the ground.

This resolution endorses international monitoring and humanitarian efforts and demands that there be full and unimpeded access, without interference in international monitoring or delivery of assistance and humanitarian supplies.

Adequate resources for humanitarian assistance in the region are vital. My Government has earmarked $20 million in assistance, in addition to $11 million previously identified, as well as other donations. We appreciate the very important contributions of others, including Members of this Council, and urge all United Nations Member States to respond to the urgent appeal by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

We also underline the importance of full cooperation with the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

We all hope that this resolution and the ongoing efforts to reach a settlement will convince Belgrade to comply with the demands of the international community. Planning at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization for military operations if these efforts do not succeed is nearing completion. The international community will not stand idly by as the situation in Kosovo deteriorates.

Today the Security Council sends a strong, unequivocal message. The Council will not tolerate the continued violence, lawlessness, repression, and violation of human rights in Kosovo.

The President: The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 4.05 p.m.